Cancer in North Eastern States

4063. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noticed a report that North-Eastern States have more number of cancer patients;

(b) if so, whether Government would study the reasons for this, if any; and

(c) whether Government would provide more financial aid to these States to fight cancer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Population Based Cancer Registry Programme (PBCR) of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) shows occurrence of certain types of cancer e.g. Oesophagus, Lung, Mouth, Nasopharynx, Stomach, etc. relatively higher in North Eastern Region as compared to other parts of the country.

(b) The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has already initiated a multi centric study entitled "Role of Tobacco use and pesticides exposure in causation of cancer" since tobacco is one of the main causes of cancer including oral cancer.

(c) To provide efficient and cost effective treatment to cancer patients in North Eastern Region, this Ministry has recognized three Regional Cancer Centres namely Dr. B.B. Cancer Institute, Guwahati, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal and Civil Hospital, Mizoram which are catering to the needs of the cancer patients. In addition to above, grant-in-aid has also been provided to Medical Colleges/Hospitals for purchase of equipment under other scheme of the National Cancer Control Programme. As a policy decision, 10% of the total budget of NCCP for the year 2007-08 has been earmarked for NE Region.

Banning of medicines having toxic contents

4064. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some countries like Australia, US and UK have banned some of India traditional medicines due to presence of higher toxic metal content;

(b) if so, what it Government's stance on this issue;

(c) whether Government have made any regulatory/monitoring system to test the metallic content mandatory for traditional drugs meant for exports;

(d) whether those medicines which are banned by these countries are presently in domestic use; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Yes, Sir. After publication of an article in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA), some regulatory agencies in other countries have issued health alerts regarding Ayurvedic India/ Unani medicines due to alleged presence of heavy metals above permissible limits.

(b) and (c) The Government have taken following steps:—

(i) Government has introduced mandatory testing for heavy metals in all purely herbal Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani medicines to be exported which is effective from 01.01.2006 onwards. This has been done to meet the regulatory requirements of importing countries.

(ii) State Drug Licensing Authorities have been directed to ensure full compliance by all ASU drug manufactures of the provision of Rule 161 (1) and (2) relating to displaying on the lable of the container or in a leaflet to be inserted in the package of an ASU drugs, the true list of all the ingradients used in the manufacture of the preparation together with the quantity of each of the ingredients incorporated therein.

(iii) Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme 29 State Drug Testing Laboratories have been strengthened and 26 Private. Drug Testing Laboratories and other NABL accredited laboratories have been approved for testing of ASU drugs in the country.

(iv) A research project has been sanctioned to various laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the Goldern Triangle Partnership Project to study the physiochemical characteristics of 8 most widely used Bhasmas and to carry out their toxicity studies.

(v) Good Manufacturing Practices have been made mandatory for all Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani drug manufacturing units in the country.

(d) and (e) The manufacturers of the medicines against whom Health Alerts have been issues by regulatory agencies of other countries have been asked to get their medicines tested for heavy metal and in case they are herbo-mettaic drugs to get their safety/toxicity tested. As per Ayurveda principles herbo-mettaic compounds following the detoxification process outlined in classicial texts are safe.

CAG Report on hospital facilities

4065. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that annual report of the CAG reveals that the hospitals in the country even in the capital lack essential medicines, equipments etc.;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the ambulances are also not used to serve the patients; and

(d) if so, the steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) In the Audit Report Vol.-II (Performance Audit of Civil Department) Delhi of CAG for the year 2005-06 observations have been made about functioning of four hospitals in Delhi namely Lok Nayak Hospital and Deen Dayal Hospital under the Government of NCT of Delhi, Hindu Rao Hospital under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Charak Palika Hospital under the New Delhi Municipal Corporation.